



Annals of Surgery

Presidential Address: The Origin and Early Development of the Southern Surgical Association

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AS WE CELEBRATE the one hundredth birthday of this association, it is appropriate to reflect on the origin of the Southern Surgical Association, which was founded in 1887. What was happening in the United States at that time? Grover Cleveland was President of the United States in 1887, and we had no Vice-President. Cleveland was confronted with a revenue surplus and asked Congress for tariff reductions. How President Reagan would envy that situation!

Cleveland keynoted the centennial celebration of the Constitution. Of interest to the South, President Cleveland ordered the war booty of the Union Army, consisting of captured Confederate flags, to be returned.

Yale had defeated Harvard in football and was considered the national football championship team. Oklahoma did not have a football team and was not even a state until 1907.

Men's clothing fashions were knickers with straw or bowler hats. Audiences were thrilled by Buffalo Bill's

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Wild West Show featuring Annie Oakley. Edison invented the motor-driven phonograph that played cylinder records. Other inventions included the player piano, the gramophone, and the first electrocardiogram. Table 1 compares life in the United States in 1887 with 1987. The gasoline-engine automobile was not yet in the United States—Daimler ran his first car in Germany in 1886. The first automobile in the U.S. was introduced in 1893 by Duryea. Airplanes were only a dream. Richard W. Sears, a former railroad clerk, and A. C. Roebuck, a watchmaker, developed an innovative form of mail order merchandising.

Discoveries and events occurring in 1887 in medicine are listed in Table 2.

At the time of these events, two brothers, W. E. B. Davis and J. D. S. Davis, founded this association in Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. W. E. B. Davis recalls the origin of "the Southern" in his Presidential Address given in 1902 at the fifteenth session of the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association.¹ W. E. B. Davis and his brother were editors of the *Alabama Medical and Surgical Journal*. This journal was their first joint

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TABLE 1. U.S.A. 1887-1987

	1887	1987
Population	59,217,000	239,743,000
Three-bedroom home	\$2,100	\$78,843
Average income	\$431	\$29,212
Eggs, 1 dozen	\$0.19	\$0.86
Bread, 1 pound	\$0.05	\$0.63
Milk, 1 gallon	\$0.25	\$2.22

venture. The journal was not successful, and publication stopped after 11 months. However, this journal stimulated the Davis brothers to propose a new medical society to be named the Alabama Surgical and Gynecological Association. The organizing meeting was held in November 1886 in the office of the *Alabama Medical and Surgical Journal*. The Davis brothers, conferring with a few prominent physicians from Birmingham, set December 15, 1886 as the organizational meeting date. Invitations were extended to fifty of Alabama's prominent physicians. The response was good.

Dr. H. N. Rosser of Birmingham was elected President and W. E. B. Davis was elected Secretary. In addition to Alabama physicians, 12 leading surgeons in the South were elected to honorary membership. Davis suggested this so that these prominent surgeons could serve as a nucleus to form a Southern association at a later date. Only one regular meeting was ever held—on October 11-12, 1887.

The Davis brothers, in their journal, had led an editorial attack regarding medical licensure in Alabama. The Davises proposed a single state medical licensing board; however, Dr. Jerome Cochran, who had organized the Alabama State Medical Association, favored a licensure of medical examiners in each county. Furthermore, the Davis brothers urged that only medical school graduates be eligible for licensure examination. Dr. Cochran was the most politically powerful figure in Alabama medicine. He opposed the proposed Alabama Surgical and Gynecological Association on the grounds that this new society might weaken the Alabama Medical Association. Dr. W. E. B. Davis went to Europe for 6 months in early 1887. His brother could not carry on alone the fight with Dr. Cochran.

TABLE 2. Discoveries and Events Related to Medicine—1887

Bruce discovers cause of Malta fever.
Fell introduces intratracheal anesthesia.
Reed does first suture of pericardium.
Sir William Gowers and Sir Victor Horsley operate on the spinal cord (1st time).
Phenacetin discovered as an analgesic.
American Orthopedic Association founded.
Sloan Maternity Hospital opened in New York City.
Gram introduces diuretin.

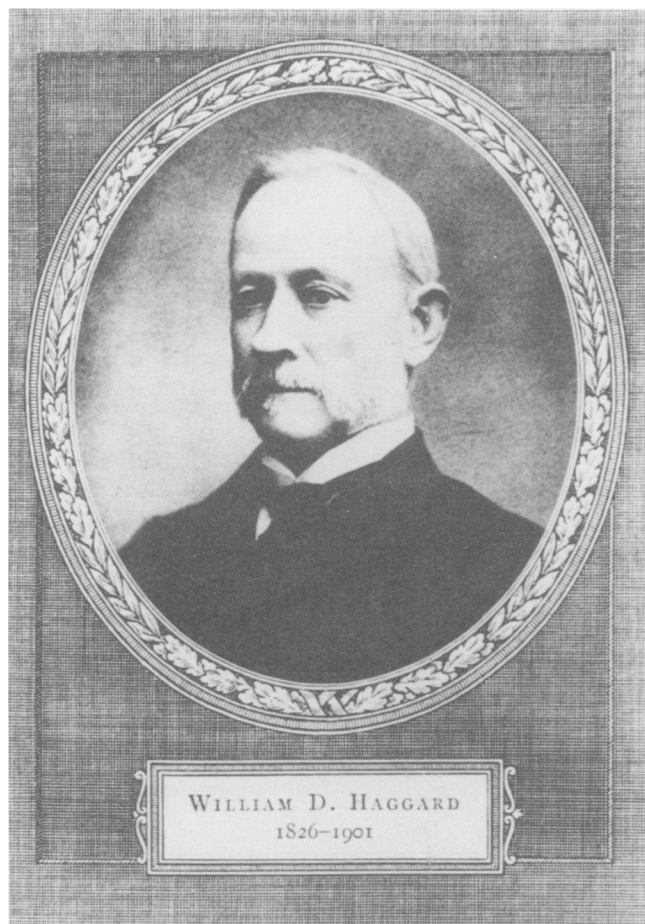


FIG. 1. W. D. Haggard—first president of the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association, 1887-1888.

In March 1887, the Alabama Medical Society voted to continue the county examining licensure boards. The *Alabama Medical and Surgical Journal* was never published after May 1887. When W. E. B. Davis returned from Europe, he realized that the Alabama Surgical and Gynecological Association was in jeopardy with Cochran's opposition. Alternatives were discussed with the distinguished honorary members from outside Alabama. The decision was made to invite surgeons throughout the South to attend the October 1887 meeting with the idea of forming—instead of the Alabama Surgical and Gynecological Association—a new society to be named the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association. Eighty replies were received in support of this idea. The Alabama Surgical and Gynecological Association met on October 11, 1887. On the second day of the meeting, October 12, 1887, the idea of forming the Southern Association was brought forth. Present was Dr. W. D. Haggard of Nashville, who argued eloquently in favor of a Southern organization (Fig. 1). The membership agreed. The Southern Surgical and Gynecologi-

TABLE 3. *Officers of the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association—1887*

W. D. Haggard—President
W. E. B. Davis—Secretary
J. S. Cain—Chairman, Judicial Council
J. D. S. Davis—Chairman, Arrangements

cal Association was formed, with W. D. Haggard as President and W. E. B. Davis as Secretary. Dr. J. S. Cain of Nashville was elected chairman of the Judicial Council and J. D. S. Davis as chairman of the Committee on Arrangements (Table 3). As W. E. B. Davis writes: "The ablest men in the South, although absent, were elected to fill the other places on the Council." All promptly wired in their acceptance. Birmingham was selected as the next meeting place. The second Tuesday of November was the agreed-upon date; however, due to yellow fever, the meeting was delayed to December 4–6, 1888. By the time of this meeting, 90 members had been enrolled. The Southern Surgical Association was born.

The Davis Brothers

Who were these Davis brothers who at such a young age (24 and 28 years old) managed to organize this distinguished surgical organization?

William Elias Brownlee Davis

William Elias Brownlee Davis (Fig. 2) was born on November 25, 1863 in Trussville, Alabama. His father, Dr. Elias Davis, joined the Confederate Army and was killed while commanding sharpshooters at Petersburg, Virginia, before William Davis' birth.² William Davis represented either the third or fifth generation of physicians in the family. Carmichael² writes "third generation," whereas Moore's¹ article states "fifth." Davis' grandfather, Dr. Daniel Elias Davis, was an early settler of Alabama. William Davis had a brother, John D. S. Davis, who was 4 years older. Their widowed mother was a strong woman who, without the assistance of a husband, overcame the devastation caused by the war and raised her sons on a farm in Jefferson County, near Trussville, Alabama.

William Davis was educated in the schools at Trussville. He was considered the best student in Trussville High School. His grade average was 99.5%, the highest ever recorded in the school's history. He was able to enter directly into the junior class at the University of Alabama. Accomplishments at an early age marked his career. He decided to follow the family tradition of medicine. His medical education was unique even for those days, as he studied medicine at Vanderbilt University, the University of Louisville, and then Bellevue Hospital Medical College. His medical degree was obtained from

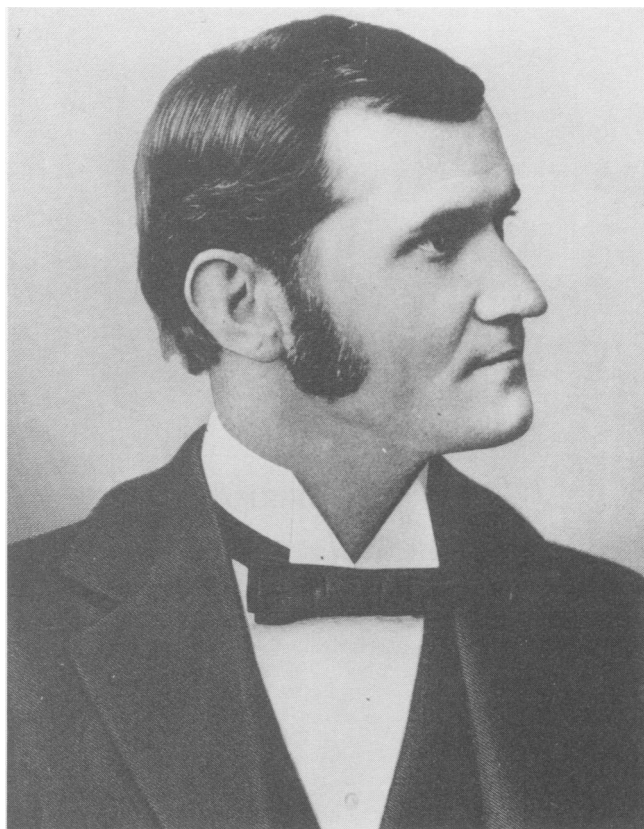


FIG. 2. William Elias Brownlee Davis—founder of the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association.

Bellevue when he was 21 years old. He then returned to Alabama to join his older brother in practice.

The Davis brothers worked together as a team in their endeavors. In 1894, William Davis and his brother—along with nine other men—established the Birmingham Medical College. William Davis assumed the position as Professor of Gynecology and Abdominal Surgery, only 10 years after graduating from medical school. He maintained this position until his death. John Davis was named Professor of Surgery.

That same year, 1894, the first hospital in Birmingham was started by the Davis brothers. This hospital was established to care for "women and surgical cases" and had a resident physician (Fig. 3).

Today, William Davis would be termed an "entrepreneur." He and John Davis founded a medical school that was the first in the country to provide an experimental surgery laboratory, a local hospital, a state medical journal, and organized the Southern Surgical Association. The Davis brothers collaborated on their experimental work, and credit was given to both for two notable investigations that were performed in the dog laboratory of the Birmingham Medical College. The Davis brothers reported their experience with 200 intestinal anastomoses performed in dogs. They demon-

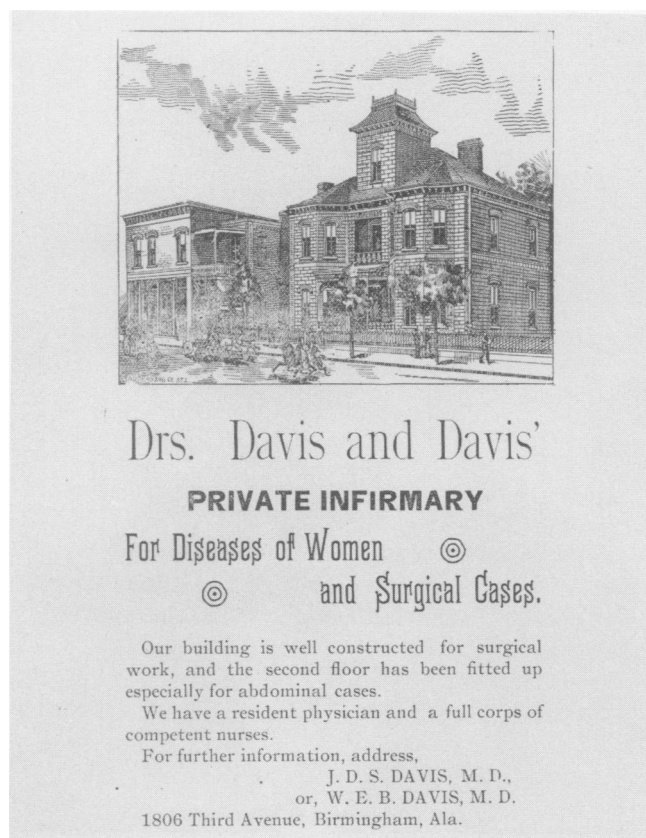


FIG. 3. The Davis brothers established their private infirmary (hospital) in Birmingham in 1894.

strated that suture anastomosis was better than anastomosis by mechanical devices. Many debates ensued with surgeons who used the Murphy button. The second major accomplishment from their "dog lab" demonstrated the advantage of transperitoneal drainage of the common bile duct rather than suture closure after choledochotomy, which was standard practice at that time. Dr. W. J. Mayo praised the Davis brothers for this work.

TABLE 4. *Surgical Organizational Positions Held by W. E. B. Davis*

Year	Position
1886	Secretary, Alabama Surgical and Gynecological Association
1887–1900	Secretary, Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association
1901–1902	President, Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association
1889	Chairman, AMA Section for Obstetricians and Gynecologists
1890	Chairman, AMA Section on Surgery
1891	President, Tri-State Medical Society of Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee
1892	President, American Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
1901	President, American Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
1902	Board of Censors, Medical Association of Alabama

TABLE 5. *Scientific Contributions of W. E. B. Davis**

Surgical treatment of biliary calculi
Operations for biliary duct obstruction
Intestinal anastomosis by suture vs. mechanical devices
Management of bullet wounds of the abdomen
Diagnostic value of peristaltic sounds
Technics of cholecystectomy
Treatment of gallstones
Postoperative care following celiotomy
Treatment of inflammation around the cecum
Charity hospitals
Control of water supply for Birmingham
Neurosis following oophorectomy
The medical profession's duty to the public
Philosophy regarding the role of a surgeon

* Modified from Carmichael.²

William Davis served as the first Secretary of the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association and maintained this position for 14 years. In 1901, he was elected President. His talents were recognized by other organizations. He served as President of the Tri-State Medical Society of Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. Other offices held were chairman of the Section for Obstetrics and Diseases of Women for the American Medical Association and the next year, 1890, chairman of the Section on Surgery (AMA). He later was elected Vice-President of the American Medical Association. He was also President of the American Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in 1901 (Table 4).

Carmichael² lists his published scientific contributions, which included biliary surgery, intestinal anastomosis, management of bullet wounds of the abdomen, postoperative abdominal care, and treatment of inflammation of the colon (Table 5).

W. E. B. Davis was described as "fearless, saying always what he believes to be the truth. His motto was 'Defend the right, and denounce fraud whenever found.'" He believed in high standards and, as Secretary, ran "the Southern" in this manner. When the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association was founded in 1887, Davis accepted the office as Secretary but was also made chairman of a committee empowered to select suitable members for the Association. All those who accepted membership and paid dues were enrolled as Founder members. Davis believed that there were few men in the South of great reputation compared to those from cities in the North and East. Therefore, Davis invited "men of great eminence from the entire country to join the Association." This made "the Southern" a national organization from its beginning. Today, about one fourth of the membership resides outside the South. However, Davis had to admit as Founding Members all the members of the Alabama Association who desired to join "the Southern." To quote him: "This necessarily admitted some members who should not have been re-

ceived into the enlarged organization. It took several years to overcome this unfortunate complication." Davis solved this dilemma by not publishing the names of these "undeservable members" in the *Transactions* when they resigned or died. In his Presidential Address, Davis wrote "It would have been peculiarly unfortunate to have had the sketch of the life of an unknown man in Alabama appear in the *Transactions*, which would have been read by many eminent surgeons who would have judged the Association by this example. However, by tact on the part of the Council and Secretary, these men have gradually disappeared from the roll, having been dropped as a rule for non-attendance or the non-payment of dues, there being a By-Law which provides that a member who fails to attend for three consecutive meetings shall be dropped from the roll and another that a member failing to pay his dues for one year shall be dropped." Thus did Davis ensure the high standards that have existed for one hundred years for membership in the Southern Surgical Association.

Three months after his Presidential Address to "the Southern," William E. B. Davis was killed at a railroad crossing in Birmingham. Coroner W. D. Paris investigated the death and reported:

"The death of Dr. Davis was an accident, pure and simple.

"When Dr. Davis approached the crossing the flagman waved his red flag and Dr. Davis stopped his horse upon nearing the track on which the Alabama Great Southern train was passing. As he came to a stop he turned the horse to the left, facing the east. There was a space left between the horse and the moving train, and while the train was passing Dr. Davis got out of his buggy and went to the horse's head, going between the horse and the train.

"When he reached the head of the horse, he caught the bridle and at the same time his foot was caught in one of the rails of the track next to that upon which the train was moving. He gave his foot a sharp jerk to release it, and as the member was released he lost his balance and fell under the train.

"I saw all of the witnesses who could be reached, and after a full and careful investigation my official decision is that Dr. Davis met his death by accident. Neither he nor the railroad company was responsible for the affair."

Dr. W. E. B. Davis is buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Birmingham.

The Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association held a series of eulogies at their next meeting. The Council appropriated funds (\$2,000) for a monument to Davis.

The Davis Statue

The Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association commissioned Giuseppe Moretti to cast in French bronze the statue of W. E. B. Davis. Moretti, who was born in Siena, Italy, lived in Budapest and had achieved fame for his bust of the Austrian emperor Franz Josef. In 1888, Moretti emigrated to the United States and moved to Pittsburgh where he made several sculptures

for Highland Park. His third commission after arriving in Pittsburgh was a statue of Cornelius Vanderbilt, which graces the campus of Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

Moretti's most famous work is Vulcan. The city of St. Louis invited Birmingham to exhibit at their Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in 1904. The Commercial Club in Birmingham engaged Moretti to cast an iron statue of the mythical god of fire and forge, Vulcan, from Alabama iron. Vulcan is the largest cast iron statue in the world, measuring 55 feet from spear tip to toe. The statue won the grand prize of the exposition. Vulcan now resides on a pedestal atop Red Mountain in Birmingham. Moretti moved to Birmingham after his success with Vulcan. His first commission in Birmingham was the W. E. B. Davis statue.³

On Wednesday, December 14, 1904 at 11:00 A.M., the Davis statue was given to the City of Birmingham. The public was invited to the unveiling and thousands attended. The procession began at City Hall and included Birmingham city officials, the Cadet Corps of Howard College, Memoli's Band, a detachment of the Alabama National Guard, and members of the Southern. Reverend L. S. Handley opened the ceremony with a prayer. Dr. William D. Haggard of Nashville was master of ceremonies. Dr. Davis' two young daughters unveiled the nine foot high bronze statue, which Charles M. Rosser of Dallas presented to the city. The Honorable John C. Forney accepted the statue for the City of Birmingham and Dr. R. M. Cunningham, acting Governor, accepted for the State of Alabama.

In 1952, it was noted that Davis' statue was tilting, not unlike the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Under the chairmanship of Dr. Joseph M. Donald (SSA President, 1961) and James M. Mason (SSA President, 1930), a committee of the Jefferson County Medical Society arranged for the statue to be relocated near the Hillman Building at the University of Alabama Medical Center. On November 4, 1957, the rededication ceremonies were held with Dr. George Finney, Secretary, and Dr. Floyd McRae, President of the Southern Surgical Association, making remarks. Dr. Robert C. Berson, Vice President, University of Alabama Medical Center and Dean of the Medical College, accepted the statue and promised that no tilting would be allowed on the medical college grounds. The statue was again unveiled by Davis' two daughters, Mrs. Elizabeth Batchelder of Warrenton, VA, and Mrs. Margaret Davis of Birmingham.

The statue bears this inscription at its base: "He would have been known to the world as a patriot had he not been known as something greater—a physician."

Gertrude Davis

William Davis' wife, Gertrude Mastin Davis (Fig. 4), was as interested in "the Southern" as her husband. She



FIG. 4. Gertrude Mastin Davis—W. E. B. Davis' wife and Honorary Fellow of the Southern Surgical Association.

attended most meetings and helped edit the *Transactions*. Gertrude Davis attended meetings of the Association after her husband's untimely death, and in 1931 was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Southern Surgical Association. She attended meetings until 1950 and died in 1953. During the first 100 years of "the Southern," she was the only woman to be elected to membership.

John Daniel Sinkler Davis

The older Davis brother, John Daniel Sinkler Davis (Fig. 5), was less outgoing than William. He was born in Trussville, Alabama on January 19, 1859 and was educated in the local schools. He graduated from the Medical College of Georgia in 1879. For two years he practiced general medicine in Ferryville, Alabama and then set up his office in Birmingham. He made friends with

the coroner and undertaker, which enabled him to perform a large number of autopsies and to secure cadavers for dissecting purposes. This prepared him for the successful experimental surgical work that he and William did in later years. Of the two brothers, John was the one who pioneered in experimental surgery. One of his studies concerned gunshot wounds of the heart in dogs. He utilized cardiac massage and wrote that animals "apparently dead for an hour could be resuscitated by massage or kneading the heart between finger and thumb."⁴ In 1893 he advocated early operation for head injuries with depressed skull fractures. He utilized plaster of Paris for fractures and performed open reduction of long bone fractures using silver bone plates.

J. D. S. Davis was more reserved than his younger brother but was described by his peers as a "great student, untiring original investigator in establishing fundamental surgical principles, teacher, organizer, leader and surgeon—a man of rare charm, culture and skill."⁵

When the Davis brothers established the Birmingham Medical College (Fig. 6), John D. S. Davis was appointed Professor of Surgery. When this institution was merged into the University of Alabama, he became Professor of Surgery at that medical school.

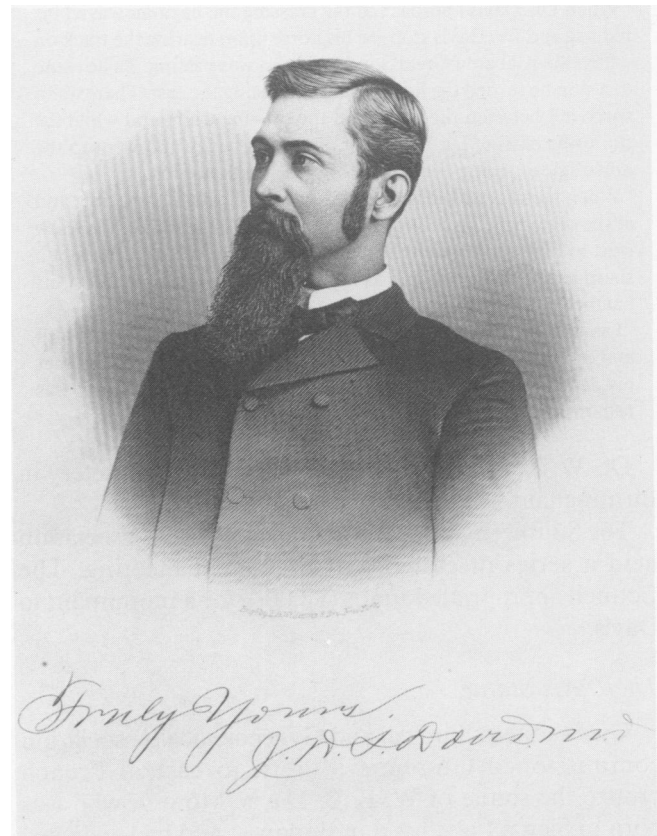


FIG. 5. John Daniel Sinkler Davis—co-founder of the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association.

John Davis never held an office in "the Southern," but he was made an Honorary Fellow when the Association changed its name in 1916 to the Southern Surgical Association, dropping the words "and Gynecological."

Like his brother, John D. S. Davis died as a result of an accident. He was involved in an automobile accident and died of complications from his injuries in 1931.

The 1888 Meeting

At the organization meeting of 1887, it was decided that the next meeting would be held in Birmingham. Dr. William David Haggard had been elected President of the newly formed Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association. Dr. Haggard was Professor of Gynecology and Diseases of Children, Medical Department, the University of Tennessee, then located in Nashville. The Chair held by Dr. Haggard had been established by Dr. Paul F. Eve and W. K. Bowling. He called the first annual meeting to order at the civilized hour of 10 A.M. on December 4, 1888, in the hall of the Young Men's Christian Association. Forty-one of the 90 members were in attendance, with 50 visitors.

The meeting was opened by an eloquent prayer by the Reverend Dr. D. I. Purser of Birmingham (Fig. 7). This custom of opening the meeting with a prayer was reinstated today by Dr. Raymond Ramage.

The Reverend Dr. Purser had an unusual background. He was born in Copiah County, Mississippi, December 24, 1843. He was raised on a farm. At the age of 17 years he joined the Confederate Army and served with an artillery company in 16 engagements. After the war, he entered business and rapidly made enough money to become financially independent. In 1870, he entered the ministry but never accepted a salary. In 1884, he accepted the call from the First Church, the only white Baptist Church in Birmingham. The membership increased from 278 to 500. Not only did he develop his own church but established four other Baptist churches, often using his own funds.

His first wife died in 1879. He married Sallie Moody of Tuscaloosa in 1883. She was the daughter of Judge Washington Moody, a man of great wealth and influence. Her brother, Frank Moody, was President of the First National Bank in Tuscaloosa. An energetic woman, she taught Sunday School and helped advance her husband's ministry.

Dr. Purser was described as a sensational, evangelical preacher. To this comment he replied "Sensation is better than stagnation."⁶

The Honorable A. O. Lane (Fig. 8), mayor of Birmingham, delivered a welcoming address, which is published in Volume I of the *Transactions*. Secretary Davis is reported to have remarked "It was the most beautiful



FIG. 6. The Birmingham Medical College, established by the Davis brothers in 1894, was merged into the University of Alabama Medical Center. The building as it appeared in 1903.

welcoming address that I have ever listened to in my life."⁷

The Secretary then read a synopsis of the published minutes of the meeting for a permanent organization. A

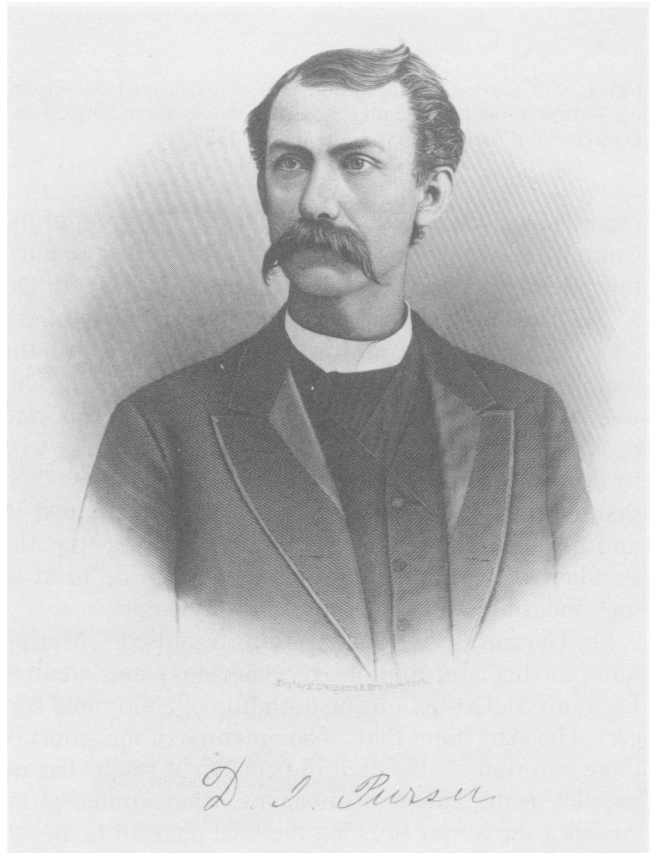


FIG. 7. Reverend Dr. D. I. Purser, whose eloquent prayer opened the first scientific session of the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association in Birmingham, 1888.

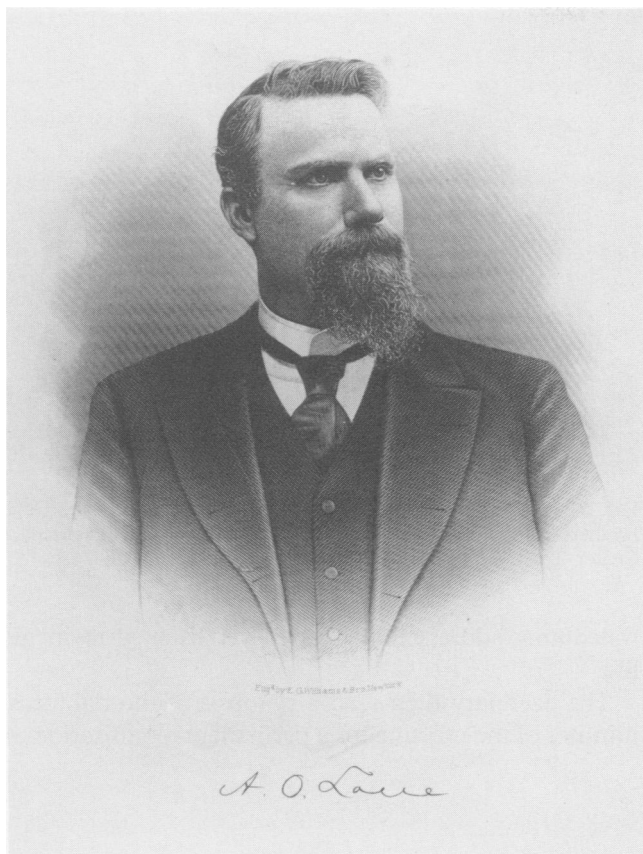


FIG. 8. A. O. Lane, mayor of Birmingham, who delivered the welcoming address at the first scientific session of the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association in Birmingham, 1888.

report was given by Dr. J. D. S. Davis, chairman of the Committee on Arrangements. Dr. Haggard appointed four members to serve on the Judicial Council with Dr. J. M. Taylor of Mississippi (the only member of the Council present). A motion was made to limit the membership in the Association to one hundred. This was referred to the Judicial Council, which reported back the next day that in its opinion it would not be wise to limit the membership to any specific number, and that the intent of the resolution could be attained in another and better way, by recommending that the standard of requirements for membership be fixed so high that only the best men would be eligible.

Dr. Haggard's Presidential Address praised J. Marion Sims for his contributions to gynecology and credited Ephraim McDowell for the founding of abdominal surgery. Haggard states that "The outcome of the labors of these two remarkable men in beneficent results has no parallel in the annals of medicine. They conferred on America the honor of being the birthplace of Gynecology, and did more to alleviate the sufferings, restore the health and prolong the lives of women than any two men living or dead." He then eloquently stated the need

for the Association and welcomed into membership those "men as have by their works entitled them to the distinction of being educated, talented and industrious workers in the field of scientific research." His concluding remarks pointed out the trend toward specialization, emphasizing the danger of surgeons becoming deficient in the fundamental principles of medicine as a whole but supporting the trend toward specialization as exemplified by Sims' achievements.

The first scientific paper on the program was given by W. B. Rogers from Memphis, Tennessee. Entitled "On the Operation of Gastrostomy, With a Report of a Successful Case," Rogers presented a patient with a lye stricture of the esophagus. He had brought the patient with him and demonstrated the gastrostomy through which food was introduced through a silver tube. A mortality rate of 29.47% for gastrostomy performed for cicatricial stricture of the esophagus had been reported by Samuel W. Gross. The surgeons present were greatly interested in Rogers' successful result. He wrote that gastrostomy was indicated to prevent starvation but warned against using gastrostomy for patients with malignancy, stating "life can, at best, only hope to be prolonged for a very brief space—the wolf only driven from the door, while the jackal within devours the household."

Eighteen scientific papers were presented in addition to the Presidential Address. Eleven other papers were read by title. All papers were published in the *Transactions*, Volume I. Perhaps the most interesting paper was given by John R. Page, former Professor at the University of Virginia, entitled "Shock of Injury." This paper would probably have won the Shipley award, if an award had been given. Page described four young men seriously injured in railroad accidents. All survived despite a loss of consciousness and evident shock. One patient fell 52 feet from a train trestle, the second and third patients fell with their engine through a trestle 25 feet into a creek bed; five coal cars tumbled in on the engine. The fourth man was severely mashed between two railroad cars while attempting to couple them. After transporting the patients to a nearby hospital, Page performed suture of lacerations and cleansing of contusions and abrasions, but no other operation. He avoided bloodletting and sedation early after injury. General supportive care, bed rest, evacuation of the urinary bladder by catheter, morphine for pain, and nutritive enemas resulted in recovery of all four patients.

In the evening the members attended the opera house for musical entertainment and an annual oration by W. F. Hyer, ex-President of the Mississippi State Medical Association. Hyer spoke about the relationship that exists between the physician and his patient. This speech is published as the last article in Volume I of the *Transactions*. On the last day of the meeting the rules of the

Association were temporarily suspended, whereupon Dr. Rogers moved that Article XV of the By-Laws providing for an annual oration be stricken out. The motion passed without dissent. Perhaps it was the late hour. At any rate, Dr. Hyer's oration was the first and the last presented to the Southern Surgical Association.

At this meeting, Hunter McGuire of Richmond was elected President. Dr. McGuire was not present but wired his acceptance. Hunter Holmes McGuire's presidency ensured the success of the Association. He was a nationally recognized leader. He served as President of the American Surgical Association in 1886 and President of the American Medical Association in 1893. As John W. Long wrote in his Presidential Address in 1914, "No organization could fail to go when inspired by the enthusiasm of Davis, censured by the wisdom of Haggard, and vitalized by the magic touch of McGuire."⁸ This trio was like the Ninth Wave. Our ancestors who lived near the ocean believed that there is always one wave that comes along that is larger than any preceding wave. This was called the Ninth Wave. This results from a remarkable combination of wind and sea. Special skill and time are needed to catch the Ninth Wave at its crest. Davis, Haggard, and McGuire—like the Ninth Wave—instituted significant change in surgery in the South. Their timing was perfect. The Southern Surgical Association rode the wave to the top during this past century.

Will the next hundred years be as fruitful? Arlie Mansberger, in his Presidential Address last year, illuminated some of the challenges that face us now: malpractice litigation, cost-restraining measures, DRGs, PROs, HMOs, PPOs, IPAs, physician reimbursement, turf battles, fragmentation, funding for graduate education and, indeed, medical education in general. Problems like these recall William French Smith's comments to incoming Attorney-General Edwin Meese. Smith remarked that some days Meese would feel like "the jave-

lin competitor who won the toss of the coin and elected to receive."⁹

A glance backward at our history can only lead to optimism. The giants of Surgery have, are, and will be fellows of the Southern Surgical Association. Just as we have climbed forward on the shoulders of our past members, so shall we advance in the future. Hunter McGuire, in his Presidential Address, predicted that "this Society will become one of the most important in this country."¹⁰ Indeed, it has. McGuire concluded his address with these words:

"Gentlemen of the Southern Association, let our motto be lofty aim and united action. As Southern men, let us show to the world that, under changed conditions, we have still the stamina of our forefathers. As members of our beloved profession, let us strive to be first in scientific attainment, first in integrity, first in high purpose for the good of mankind."

I can conclude with no better words than those, so eloquently said in Nashville, Tennessee in 1889.

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